

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

I. General information

Assignment name	Recruitment of an Expert to support the AfCFTA Implementation Review Mechanism for Ethiopia's Trade in Services
Beneficiary	MoTRI, Private Sector and Other Relevant Stakeholders
Country	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Total estimated number of days	50 working days

II. Context and justification of the need

Context

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provides a framework for progressively liberalizing trade in services across Africa and creating a more integrated continental services market. The Protocol on Trade in Services establishes common principles and rules for services trade, while allowing State Parties to undertake specific commitments on market access and national treatment in accordance with their agreed Schedules of Specific Commitments. The first round of services negotiations has prioritized five sectors: business services, communication services, financial services, transport services and tourism services.

For Ethiopia, effective implementation of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services requires more than the adoption of commitments. It requires an assessment of the extent to which Ethiopia's legal, regulatory, institutional and administrative frameworks are aligned with its AfCFTA obligations and commitments, as well as the practical conditions facing Ethiopian services suppliers seeking to access African markets.

The AfCFTA Implementation Review Mechanism (AFIRM) is intended to support systematic review of the implementation of AfCFTA commitments by State Parties. The African Union has highlighted the need for an effective implementation review mechanism to support State Parties in implementing their commitments and realizing the objectives of the AfCFTA, with national consultations and appropriate review tools forming part of its operationalization.

Justification

Against this background, Expertise France, through the ECOTRADE Project, intends to engage an expert to support an implementation review of Ethiopia's commitments and measures relating to trade in services under the AfCFTA. The review will provide an evidence-based assessment of progress, gaps, institutional and regulatory constraints, and practical actions required to strengthen implementation.

The assignment will place particular emphasis on the five priority services sectors and on the relationship between Ethiopia's commitments, domestic regulatory frameworks and the ability of Ethiopian services suppliers to benefit from market opportunities across Africa. The review will also engage relevant government institutions, regulators, private-sector representatives and other stakeholders to validate findings and identify feasible recommendations.

III. Objectives and desired results

1) General objective

The overall objective of the assignment is to undertake an evidence-based review of Ethiopia's implementation of its AfCFTA commitments on trade in services, using the relevant AfCFTA Implementation Review Mechanism framework, and to identify practical measures to strengthen implementation and enable Ethiopian services suppliers to benefit from the AfCFTA.

2) Specific objectives

- Assess the status of Ethiopia's implementation of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services and relevant commitments, with particular attention to the five priority services sectors.
- Review the consistency and effectiveness of relevant laws, regulations, policies, institutional arrangements and administrative procedures in supporting Ethiopia's AfCFTA services commitments.
- Assess the extent to which Ethiopia's market access and national treatment commitments are reflected in the domestic regulatory and institutional environment and can be operationalized in practice.
- Identify implementation gaps, regulatory and institutional bottlenecks, and other barriers affecting cross-border trade in services and the participation of Ethiopian services suppliers in African markets.
- Assess the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms among government institutions, regulators, private-sector organizations and other stakeholders responsible for trade in services.
- Generate evidence-based recommendations and a practical implementation action plan to address identified gaps and strengthen Ethiopia's participation in AfCFTA trade in services.

3) Anticipated results

- A comprehensive evidence base on the status of Ethiopia's implementation of AfCFTA commitments on trade in services is established.
- The legal, regulatory, institutional and administrative framework affecting Ethiopia's trade in services is reviewed against relevant AfCFTA commitments and requirements.
- Key implementation gaps, regulatory constraints, institutional bottlenecks and barriers affecting services trade are identified and prioritized.
- Stakeholder perspectives from government, regulators, private-sector services suppliers and other relevant actors are incorporated into the review.
- Practical and prioritized recommendations are developed to strengthen implementation and improve the operating environment for Ethiopian services suppliers.
- A realistic implementation action plan, including priority actions, responsible institutions and indicative timelines, is developed to support follow-up by relevant stakeholders.

IV. Description of the assignment

1) Planned activities

The expert will undertake the following indicative activities, which may be refined in consultation with Expertise France and relevant Ethiopian stakeholders:

1. Review of Ethiopia's AfCFTA services commitments

- Review the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services, relevant annexes, modalities, decisions/directives and Ethiopia's applicable Schedules of Specific Commitments.
- Map Ethiopia's commitments across the five priority services sectors: business, communication, financial, transport and tourism services.
- Review the commitments by relevant modes of supply and identify applicable market access and national treatment conditions and limitations.
- Assess the status of implementation and identify areas where commitments have not yet been fully operationalized.

2. Legal, regulatory and institutional review

- Review relevant Ethiopian laws, regulations, policies, licensing requirements, administrative procedures and institutional mandates affecting trade in services.
- Assess the alignment of the domestic framework with Ethiopia's AfCFTA commitments and relevant transparency, market access and national treatment requirements.
- Review the roles and coordination arrangements of institutions involved in trade in services, including the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration and relevant sector regulators and agencies.
- Identify regulatory overlaps, gaps, inconsistencies, procedural constraints and institutional capacity issues that may affect implementation.

3. Assessment of services trade and market access conditions

- Assess the practical conditions faced by Ethiopian services suppliers seeking to supply services in other African markets.
- Identify key barriers affecting services trade, including regulatory, licensing, recognition, movement of service suppliers, information and other market-entry constraints, as relevant to the scope of the review.
- Assess opportunities for Ethiopian services suppliers arising from AfCFTA commitments and identify sectors or subsectors with potential for increased intra-African trade.
- Where relevant, consider the interaction between services trade commitments and related issues such as digitalization, investment, professional mobility and mutual recognition.

4. Stakeholder consultations and validation

- Develop a stakeholder engagement plan covering relevant government institutions, regulators, private-sector associations, services suppliers, professional bodies and other stakeholders.
- Conduct interviews, focus-group discussions, consultations and/or targeted surveys to collect evidence on implementation challenges and opportunities.
- Validate emerging findings with relevant stakeholders and ensure that recommendations reflect institutional mandates and practical implementation realities.

- Facilitate a validation workshop to discuss the findings and agree priority recommendations, where requested.

5. Development of implementation recommendations and action plan

- Prioritize identified gaps and constraints according to their significance, feasibility and potential impact on AfCFTA services trade.
- Develop practical recommendations for policy, legal, regulatory, institutional and administrative improvements.
- Develop a sequenced implementation action plan identifying priority actions, responsible institutions, indicative timelines and, where appropriate, resource or capacity requirements.
- Identify areas where additional technical assistance, capacity building or stakeholder engagement may be required.

6. Knowledge sharing and capacity building

- Present findings and recommendations to Expertise France/ECOTRADE and relevant Ethiopian stakeholders.
- Provide practical guidance to relevant institutions on the application of the AfCFTA implementation review approach to trade in services.
- Document key lessons and recommendations that can inform future ECOTRADE support to AfCFTA implementation.

a. Anticipated deliverables

Deliverables	Description
1. Inception Report	Initial implementation work plans with timelines and methodologies
2. AfCFTA Services Commitments & Sectoral Mapping Report	Comprehensive baseline review and mapping of Ethiopia's commitments across the five priority sectors (Business, Communication, Financial, Transport, Tourism). Includes a gap analysis of operationalization across all four modes of supply, identifying specific Market Access and National Treatment limitations.
3. Legal, Regulatory & Institutional Alignment Assessments	Detailed evaluation of domestic laws, regulations, licensing, and institutional frameworks. Identifies regulatory overlaps, gaps, administrative bottlenecks, and capacity constraints across the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) and sector-specific regulators.
4. Market Access, Trade Barriers & Opportunities Analysis	Practical assessment of market conditions for Ethiopian service exporters in African markets, highlighting key entry barriers (regulatory, mobility, mutual recognition) alongside high-potential trade and investment opportunities linked to digitalization and cross-border trade.
5. Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Survey Insights & Validation Workshop Report	Execution of structured stakeholder engagement across public and private sectors, including a formal

	Engagement Plan, survey/interview analysis, and documentation of validation workshop outcomes to ensure consensus on findings.
6. AfCFTA Services Implementation Action Plan & Capacity Building Package	Prioritized, sequenced roadmap detailing policy/legal reforms, responsible institutions, timelines, and resource needs. Includes capacity-building sessions and lessons learned documentation for Expertise France/ECOTRADE and MoTRI.
7. Final Report	Final consolidated technical assignment report capturing key lessons and strategic recommendations.

b. Coordination

- The service provider shall designate two contact persons for project implementation purposes.
- The expert will work under the direct supervision of an assigned official from the ECOTRADE Project.
- Coordination with specific stakeholders may be required

4. Place, duration and terms of performance

- a. **Implementation period:** December 2026 to June 2027
- b. **Start date:** December 2026
- c. **End date:** June 2027

5. Required expertise and profile

- a. **Number of experts per assignment:** to be determined per specific activity
- b. **Profile of the designated expert(s) responsible for contract execution**

A. Qualifications and skills:

- Master's or PhD in Economics, International Trade, Agricultural Economics, Development Studies, Business Administration, or a related field.
- Excellent qualities/capacities in:
 - Analysis and reporting,
 - Strong quantitative and qualitative research skills,
 - Knowledge transfer,

- Problem identification and resolution,
- Presentation and communication skills,
- High proficiency in written and spoken in English.

B. General professional experience

- Proven experience of at least 5 years in the field of trade analysis, value chain studies, and private sector development, preferably in Africa or similar emerging markets.
- Experience Familiarity with AfCFTA implementation, regional trade agreements, or national trade policies.

C. Specific professional experience

- Preferred prior experience in working with SMEs, agribusinesses, or commodity sectors (especially coffee, oilseeds, or other agricultural exports).
- Solid experience in data collection, stakeholder consultations, and participatory research methods.